AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

(1) Please insert the following paragraph between the title and line 11 on page 1:

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This is a national stage of PCT International Application No. PCT/EP04/04775, filed May 5, 2004, which claims priority to German Patent Application No. 103 26 517.1, filed June 12, 2003, the entire contents of which are expressly incorporated herein by reference thereto.

(2) Please amend the following paragraph on page 1, lines 11-16, as follows (including insertion of the underlined section heading):

~~DESCRIPTION~~

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to an apparatus for the dynamic stabilization of bones or bone fragments, in particular spinal vertebrae, ~~with~~ that includes at least one longitudinal support that can be fixed to the vertebrae.

(3) Please amend the following paragraph on page 1, lines 17-22, as follows (i.e., insert the underlined section heading):

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The main indications for dynamic fixation, in particular when performed from the posterior aspect, are age- or disease-induced degeneration of structures in the spinal column as well as inflammation and/or injuries in the region of the intervertebral disk, the ligament apparatus, the facet joints and/or the subchondral bone.

(4) Please amend the following paragraph on page 4, lines 1-6, as follows (i.e., insert the underlined section heading):

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Accordingly, one of the objectives of the present invention is to create an apparatus for the dynamic stabilization of bones or bone fragments, in particular vertebrae, with at least one longitudinal support that can be fixed to the vertebrae and can effortlessly be adapted to the most diverse situations for implantation, with no impairment of the dynamics.

(5) Please amend the following paragraph on page 4, lines 7-20, as follows:

~~This objective is achieved by the characterizing features given in Claim 1, preferred structural details of which are described in the subordinate claims.~~ The basic idea of the present invention is ~~thus~~ that the at least one longitudinal support, which for example is fixed between two adjacent pedicle screws, is so constructed that by applying a predetermined bending force, it can be deformed plastically from a first shape state "A" into a second, alternative shape state "B," the bending force needed for this purpose being distinctly greater than the peak forces that occur in vivo. While remaining in each of the two stable shape states, however, the longitudinal support should be flexible within the limits imposed by the mechanical interaction between fixation system and vertebral-column segment, which define a so-called "elastic flexion range."

(6) Please amend the following paragraph on page 13, lines 10-13, as follows:

This objective is achieved in accordance with the invention by ~~the characteristics given in Claim 13, both independently of the considerations underlying Claims 1 to 12 and also, in particular, in combination therewith~~ optionally providing longitudinal-support-connecting means that can be used to connect at least two support sections to one another.

(7) Please amend the following paragraph on page 14, lines 7-9, as follows (i.e., insert the underlined section heading):

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

In the following, an exemplary embodiment of a stabilization system in accordance with the invention is explained in greater detail with reference to that attached drawings, wherein:

(8) Please amend the following paragraph starting on page 14, lines 19-21, as follows (i.e., insert the underlined section heading):

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

~~In~~ Figures 1 and 2 ~~is shown~~ show part of a spinal column, wherein the individual vertebrae are identified by the reference letters "V." The spinal column is identified by the letter "S."

(9) Please amend the following paragraph starting on page 16, line 32, and ending on page 17, line 5, as follows:

~~In other respects, regarding preferred embodiments, reference is made to those according to Claims 16-18, which state for example that~~ In those embodiments where the core ~~can be~~ is shaped as a flat band or strip, ~~with a~~ its width ~~that~~ is the same as or smaller than the corresponding dimension of the longitudinal support. This configuration is naturally primarily appropriate for supports that have a band-like shape.

(10) Please amend the following paragraph on page 17, lines 9-10, as follows:

~~Regarding~~ The longitudinal support preferably has a rotationally symmetrical core, ~~reference is made to Claim 17~~ such as, for example, a circular core.